

around, trying to make them disappear, I finally had forced one into my mouth, when Dad made the announcement. I almost choked. He's going to join the military. He'd deployed on April 30th. He said he's wanted to do this for a long time; he's always wanted to fight for our country, but I don't want him to leave. I hope I'm not being selfish, but I just don't think I can watch my daddy leave with no guarantee he'll be back.

April 29th

Tomorrow Dad leaves. Today was family day, I didn't find it fun. We just spent the day together, fretting about everything. Now I'm trying to sleep, but when I close my eyes, I see horrible images.

April 30th

Dad's Gone. I was kind of in a daze as we drove to the airport. Before he left I gave him my necklace; it has a little angel on it. He put it on and said he won't take it off until he comes home. I'm trying to write through tears, but it's hard because my vision's blurring. I don't know why it didn't hit me until right after Dad walked away, that I might not see him again.

August 4th

HE'S!! MISSING!! We got a phone call. They said he never came back. Mom promises he's fine, I try to believe her. It's okay, I tell myself, but tears keep coming.

September 13th

My birthday. A day to never forget. I opened the mailbox praying there would be something from Dad. And . . . there kinda was. It was a teeny-tiny envelope with my name on it. It looked like it was holding something, a secret waiting to be told, so big it was about to burst at the seams. I opened it and my necklace fell out. My mind turned to mush, he said he'd wear it until he was home, but why was it mailed, what if he was home . . . just in spirit. OH NO! Thoughts swirled around in my head like a blender, and I sat down on the curb and cried. Later, there was a knock on the door, I slowly opened it. On the other side was something unbelievable; Dad. There he was standing there, home. He had a cast on his leg and bandages everywhere, but he smiled as if he'd won the lottery. That's when he became my hero.

A patriot is a person that loves and defends their country. It means so much to me, these people, risking their lives for us. These people do things that I wouldn't have the courage to do, and I would like to say something to them; thank you.

IN HONOR OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DODGERS IN LOS ANGELES

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 14, 2008

Mr. BECERRA. Madam Speaker, it is with utmost pleasure and privilege that I rise today to congratulate the Dodgers for calling the City of Los Angeles its home for the last 50 years. I'm honored to be participating in the kick off event at the Los Angeles City Hall on March 28 for what will be a year-long "Golden Anniversary" celebration.

The Los Angeles Dodgers played their first home game on April 18, 1958, defeating the San Francisco Giants 6–5 before 78,672 fans at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. Since arriving in Los Angeles 50 years ago, the

Dodgers have had its share of baseball firsts, major league moments, shattered records and invaluable players—making baseball history and achieving golden moments over and over again.

The Dodgers led the geographic expansion of baseball to the west and managed to preserve the New York City cross-town rivalry by convincing the Giants to move to California as well. The historic and heated competition between the Dodgers and the Giants is more than a century old, and is the longest rivalry in baseball history. In 1959 the Dodgers, then playing their second season in Los Angeles, played the defending World Champion New York Yankees in an exhibition game in Roy Campanella's honor at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. The attendance was 93,103—still the largest crowd ever to attend a Major League Baseball game. The Dodgers are set to make history again when they play the defending World Champion Boston Red Sox in an exhibition game on March 29, 2008, at the Coliseum. The game is expected to draw the largest baseball crowd since the Dodgers played that historic 1959 game at the same venue.

The Los Angeles Dodgers earned its reputation for success with five World Championships, nine National League pennants, 15 playoff appearances, eight Cy Young Award winners, four MVPs, an incredible 12 Rookie of the Year recipients (five of which were handed out in five consecutive years—an unmatched feat), and numerous other Major League Baseball honors. And in addition to these impressive records and awards are other "golden moments" that stand out in the minds of Dodgers fans.

The 1981 Opening Day starting pitcher was a 20-year-old rookie from Mexico. Fernando Valenzuela pitched a shutout that day and proceeded to win his first eight decisions with five shutouts. Later that year Fernando helped the Dodgers win its first World Series title since 1965. "Fernandomania" swept through the baseball world, a culture-crossing phenomenon that took Los Angeles and the world by storm when Valenzuela won both the National League Rookie of the Year and Cy Young awards, becoming the first player to win both in the same year.

And all true blue Dodgers fans can close their eyes and picture the footage of Kirk Gibson hobbling around the bases on both hurt legs, and pumping his fist as he rounds second base, during his pinch-hit home run in game one of the 1988 "Fall Classic." The Dodgers would go on to win a World Series upset that year, and Gibson's "golden moment," his single swing, is considered the ninth most memorable moment in Major League Baseball history.

In all likelihood only one or two fans even remember one of my personal favorite Dodgers "golden moments," and I must admit it was not the bottom of the ninth inning, with two outs, and the bases loaded. But once upon a time, a certain local congressman was invited to throw the first pitch of a ball game—and it was a perfect strike! Such are the heart pounding thrills that the Dodgers deliver time and again.

Madam Speaker, after 50 years of time honored tradition in Los Angeles, the Dodgers truly are a community institution. An institution I'm proud calls Dodger Stadium in my 31 st Congressional District of California home.

Whether you are "thinking blue," "bleeding Dodger blue" or "praying to the big Dodger in the sky," many Angelenos share an intense loyalty and kinship with their "Boys in Blue." I look forward to many more decades of the Los Angeles Dodgers' community involvement and history-making baseball accomplishments.

IN RECOGNITION OF MICHAEL McDOWELL

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 14, 2008

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of Michael McDowell, former Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Ireland, as we welcome him to Cleveland, Ohio, on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 2008.

For almost 30 years, Tim Collins and Thomas Scanlon have organized the St. Patrick's Day Party and Parade, a festive event that brings people together in the heart of Cleveland. On this exceptional day, Cleveland's streets are a sea of green, full with the lively sounds of traditional Irish music, laughter and the spirit of all those joining together to celebrate rich Irish culture.

Born in Dublin, Ireland in May 1951, Michael McDowell followed in the footsteps of his grandfather by dedicating his life to public service and leadership. Mr. McDowell has a decorated political history as a founding member of the Progressive Democrats Political Party, in which he served as President from 2002–2006. While leading the Progressive Democrats Party, he also held the distinguished post of Tanaiste. He was one of 14 Progressive Democrat Teachta Dála's elected to Dáil Éireann in the 1987 general election, the first election after the party was founded. In this position, he represented Dublin's South East constituency from 1987–1989, 1992–1997 and 2002–2007. In 2002, he began his 5-year tenure as Ireland's Minister of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, and served as Attorney General from 1999 to 2002.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honor and recognition of former Irish politician, Michael McDowell, for joining us as we celebrate St. Patrick's Day in Cleveland. Please also join me in recognition of Tim Collins and Thomas Scanlon for their efforts in organizing this marvelous St. Patrick's Day Party this year, as they have for almost 30-years.

HONORING CAROLINE WRIGHT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 14, 2008

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Caroline Wright of Blue Springs, Missouri. Caroline is a very special young woman who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Girl Scouts of America, and earning the most prestigious award of Girl Scout Gold Award.

Caroline has been very active with her troop, participating in many scout activities. In order to receive the prestigious Gold Award,